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LETTER DATED 11 FEBRUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the statement made by the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, M. S. Gorbachev, on 9 February 1991 concerning the developments in the Persian Gulf.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

READEX
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Annex

Statement by the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning the developments in the Persian Gulf

Events in the Persian Gulf region are taking an increasingly disturbing and dramatic turn. The largest war in recent decades is gaining momentum. The number of casualties is increasing, inter alia among the peaceful population. The military actions have already caused enormous material damage. Entire countries - first Kuwait, then Iraq, and next, perhaps, others as well - are threatened with catastrophic destruction. The discharge of a vast quantity of oil into the Persian Gulf may develop into an extremely serious environmental disaster.

The Soviet leadership confirms once again its principled adherence to the Security Council resolutions which reflect the will of the majority of countries and the hopes of peoples for a new international order which will exclude aggression and encroachment upon other countries' territory and natural resources.

However, the logic of the military operations and the nature of the military actions create a risk that the mandate defined in these resolutions may be exceeded.

The provocative attempts to enlarge the scope of the war by involving Israel and other States in it, thus giving the armed conflict yet another destructive dimension, the Arab-Israeli one, are also extremely dangerous.

To judge from certain statements that have been made at a political level and by influential mass media, an attempt is under way to accustom people on both sides of the conflict to the idea that the use of weapons of mass destruction is possible, and permissible. If this happened, the whole of world politics and the entire world community would be shaken to their foundations.

The course this war has taken is a matter of great concern to the Soviet people and to the country's leadership, the more so in that it is raging close to the borders of the Soviet Union.

A sense of historical responsibility, common sense and humanity all lead to the same conclusion - that everything possible should be done to bring about a political settlement on the basis of the Security Council resolutions. At this critical juncture, I make a public and urgent appeal to the President of Iraq to weigh once again what is at stake for his country, and to demonstrate the realism which would make it possible to move towards a reliable and just peaceful settlement. I am sending my personal representative to Baghdad immediately for a meeting with President Hussein.

It is our hope that in this way we shall be able, together with the Arab and other Muslim States, with the countries of Europe and Asia, and above all with the United States of America and with all the permanent members of the Security Council, not only to help put an end to the state of war as soon as possible but

also to pave the way for a strong and equitable system of security in this region that is so vital to the entire world, one which will of course include the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and of the problem of Palestine - with the decisive role in the process being played primarily by the States of the region. A fitting place in the post-war order must be assigned to Iraq, whose people cannot be held responsible for what has happened, but rather deserve our sympathy, compassion and support.

I repeat: In order to effect a breakthrough to peace in the Near and Middle East, the flames of war in the Gulf must be extinguished as soon as possible. At the present juncture, that is what is most important.